

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 3-5 and 7-11 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 2, 6, 12 and 13 have been canceled by this amendment.

Applicants note that a number of editorial amendments have been made to the specification and abstract for grammatical and general readability purposes. No new matter has been added.

I. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101

The Examiner has rejected claims 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 a being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants have amended claim 11 in a manner to overcome this rejection, and have canceled claims 12 and 13. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 6 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this amendment, Applicants note that claim 1 has been amended so as to include all of the features of allowable claim 6 and intervening claim 2, thereby placing claim 1 in condition for allowance. Applicants note that minor changes have also been made to claim 1 in order to improve the clarity thereof.

In addition, regarding claims 10 and 11, Applicants note that claim 10 is a method claim corresponding to claim 1, and that claim 11 is computer-readable medium claim

corresponding to claim 1. Applicants note that claims 10 and 11 have been amended in a similar manner as claim 1.

In particular, Applicants note that each of claims 10 and 11 now recites that said controlling includes referring to a controlled state administration table which stores information on a content of operation and a permissible lapse of time of an operation following the control command for each of at least some of the one or more devices, and wherein, if a lapse of time after some content of operation was changed into an operation following the control command exceeds the corresponding permissible lapse of time, then said controlling prohibits an output of the control command corresponding to the some content of operation.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 10 and 11 are also in condition for allowance, an indication of which is kindly requested.

III. Claim Rejections

Claims 1-4 and 8-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Odaohhara et al. (U.S. 6,574,740); claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Odaohhara et al. in view of Umetsu (U.S. 6,498,957); and claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Odaohhara et al. in view of Goodnow et al. (U.S. 6,167,524).

Regarding claim 1, as noted above, this claim has been amended so as to include the allowable features of claim 6 and intervening claim 2, thereby placing this claim in condition

for allowance. Claims 3-5 and 7-9 depend from claim 1 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Regarding claims 10 and 11, as noted above, these claims have been amended in a similar manner as claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 10 and 11 are in condition for allowance, an indication of which is kindly requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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